



The Empress Zaoditu, Daughter of the Late Menelek, and Reputed Descendant of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, in Her Gorgeous Coronation Robes, After Her Final Triumph Over Her Pro-German Mohammedan Enemies.

Sheba's Daughter Saves the Oldest Christian Land for the Cross

The Triumph of Empress Zaoditu, of Abyssinia, King Solomon's Descendant, Over the Pro-German Mohammedan Forces of the Deposed Emperor

WHILE the great war has been absorbing most of the attention of civilization strange and thrilling events have been happening in the far-away, little known African land of Abyssinia.

A fierce civil war in that country has resulted in placing a Christian Empress on the throne of her fathers and the complete defeat of the pagan, pro-German, Mohammedan forces.

This event is of more than merely curious interest, for Abyssinia has good claims to be regarded as the oldest Christian land in the world and to the possession of the largest proportion of the purest ancient Hebrew blood—the blood of King David, King Solomon and other great Hebrew patriots of the most glorious period of Judaism.

The new Empress Zaoditu, who has just been secured on the throne, is reputed to be a descendant of King Solomon and the immortal Queen of Sheba, which enormously increases her claims to our attention.

There is no doubt that Abyssinia was the country of that magnificent and generous Queen of Sheba, whose visit to King Solomon at Jerusalem is described with considerable detail in the Bible. In the Book of Kings, Chapter X, we read:

"1. When the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions.

"2. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

"3. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the King which he told her not.

"10. And she gave the King an hundred talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

"13. And King Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants."

Very ancient Hebrew and Arab legends prove that this famous Queen came from a land that roughly corresponds to the present Abyssinia. The land was also known in the Bible and in the classics as Ethiopia.

The reason why Sheba and Ethiopia are thus associated is simple. Sheba, or Saba, was an important country of southern Arabia. The Sabaean Arabs extended their rule across the few miles of the Red Sea that separated them from Ethiopia, and in King Solomon's time the race had its most important territory in the latter country.

The Arabic legends tell the story of the Queen of Sheba, partly as it is given in the Bible, but with many additional interesting details. They give the Queen's name as Balkis. They say she had a son by King Solomon, whom she called Menelek, and that has ever since been a favorite name in the land. It was borne by the late Emperor Menelek, and he, in turn, was reputed to be a descendant of King Solomon. As the present Empress is his daughter she can claim the same illustrious ancestry.

Concerning the early conversion of the land to Christianity, there is strong evidence. In the Acts of the Apostles, Chap-

ter VIII, we read that while the Apostle Philip was preaching there came to him "a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship."

The Bible tells us that this man listened to the teaching of the Gospel and "went on his way rejoicing." With the help of Queen Candace he founded the Christian church in Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, in the very lifetime of the first Apostles. It has existed there ever since, in spite of ages of change and the rise of Mohammedanism in Asia and Africa.

And now, as to recent occurrences in this picturesque land. Abyssinia was thrown into a state of convulsion at the very beginning of the European war. About that time the Emperor Menelek, who had governed Abyssinia with a success unknown among native African rulers, died. His death was concealed for several months, because it was felt that no one could fill his place successfully, but finally it was necessary to let the people know the truth.

His widow, the notorious Empress Taitou, who had had ten husbands and lost all but Menelek by violent deaths, endeavored to grasp the supreme power. Her career did not recommend her as a safe person to the most influential chiefs of Abyssinia, and after a brief struggle the Empress, who had lost much of her early vigor, was overthrown and placed in a convent.

The outbreak of internal strife gave the Germans an opportunity of interfering, according to the policy they have followed in all parts of the world. The nearest heir to the throne was a young boy, named Lidj Yeassu, grandson of Emperor Menelek and son of his oldest daughter and her husband, Ras Mikail. He was hastily crowned Emperor as soon as the Taitou disturbances had been suppressed.

Now, although Abyssinia is mainly Christian, a certain section is Mohammedan, which is not surprising, as the country has always been in close contact with the great centres of Mohammedanism. Ras Mikail happened to be chief of a territory that was largely Mohammedan.

The Germans, with the help of Turks and other Mohammedan agents, planned to take advantage of this fact and turn the country into a non-Christian, pro-German, Mohammedan stronghold. German money was spent freely in promoting strife.

Leaflets printed in the native tongue were circulated by the German agents, declaring that England, France and Italy were in league to destroy the independence of the country and divide it between them. This lie gained credence among many Abyssinians the more easily because of the fierce struggle they had had with Italy in recent years.

The German propaganda progressed famously for a time. Christians were driven out of public offices and murdered and Mohammedans appointed in their places. The representatives of the Entente Allies and the United States were insulted and threatened, and the Germans and Turkish agents became the favorite advisers of the court. A new war against Italy was threatened.

Finally, the misguided young Emperor, Lidj Yeassu, under the influence of his German and Turkish advisers, publicly announced that he had become a Mohammedan, and that henceforth Mohammedanism would be the national religion of Abyssinia, the oldest Christian country in the world. The Emperor's name, "Yeassu," by the way, means "Jesus." At about the same time Lidj Yeassu removed

his capital from Addis Abeba, its ancient site, to Harrar, in order that it might be near the Mohammedan tribes who dwell east of this province.

These steps outraged the Christian elements of Abyssinia beyond endurance. Ras Tafari, Governor of the Province of Harrar, whom German agents had plotted to assassinate, placed himself at the head of the opposition, which included the principal Christian priests and native princes. A large army was raised, and after fierce fighting Lidj Yeassu fled into the territory of his father, Ras Mikail.

During this struggle the youngest daughter of Menelek, the Princess Zaoditu, had remained true to the Christian religion, the faith of her fathers, and upon her the hopes of the Christians were centered. She showed a spirit worthy of the best traditions of queenly rulers.

A great national gathering of Christians called a "maskal" was summoned to meet at Addis Abeba. There, amid solemn ceremony, the supreme head of the national church, the Abuna Matheos, or Archbishop Matthew, solemnly released every Abyssinian from his oath of allegiance, and declared Lidj Yeassu deposed from the throne for his religious apostasy.

The throne was then offered to the Princess Zaoditu, and she accepted it, and promised to defend the Christian faith as long as she lived. The Ras Tafari was named as her successor in case she had no children.

The deposed ruler had then taken refuge in the territory of his father, Ras Mikail, who raised an army and endeavored to replace him on the throne. The army was assisted by German officers and munitions, but in the wild mountainous land of Abyssinia bravery and a knowledge of local conditions proved more important than military science. Ras Mikail was defeated in a sanguinary battle, and both he and his son taken prisoners.

The latest dispatches from Abyssinia report that the Empress Zaoditu has been crowned with Christian rites. The ceremony, which was extremely elaborate and picturesque, occurred at the Cathedral of St. George in Addis Abeba. The Ministers of the Entente Powers and the United States represented their Governments.

The German Minister and the Turkish Consul-General were not present. It is conjectured that their participation in a plan to murder the new Empress and her principal supporters, including the Archbishop, may have had something to do with their absence.

After the ceremony the Empress left the Cathedral, supported by the Regent Ras Tafari and by Ras Kassa, a cousin of Menelek. She then took her seat on a throne in the centre of a large platform erected in the courtyard. The Diplomatic Corps having passed before her, ceremoniously bowing, the Archbishop of Abyssinia made a speech, in which he cleverly showed that a woman ruler was a hopeful sign for the country. He referred to the Queen of Sheba, Queen Candace and other illustrious women who had been famed in Abyssinia in ancient times. He reminded the fierce natives that England had enjoyed her greatest prosperity under the rule of a woman, Queen Victoria, who reigned for sixty years and was a good friend of Abyssinia. Altogether, he satisfied his hearers that they were far better off under a Christian Empress than under a Mohammedan pro-German Emperor.

The new Empress possesses the grandest collection of emeralds in the world, although they are crudely cut. Her crown jewels of all kinds are very valuable, for



A New and Interesting Conception of the Gorgeous and Generous Queen of Sheba's Visit to King Solomon. Her Gold and Emerald Mines Are Now Possessed by the Newly Crowned Empress of Abyssinia. Painting by Julius Kronberg, the Noted Swedish Artist

Abyssinia is noted for its vast wealth of precious stones and gold. One of Her Majesty's emblems of power is a great umbrella adorned with gold and jewels, which is raised above her throne. This umbrella is never loaned.

It will greatly interest all Bible scholars to know that Abyssinia has been definitely saved to Christianity. In this country are strangely preserved many forgotten rites of the ancient Hebrews and the first Christians. After the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon, it is said 12,000 Hebrews of the best families in Jerusalem settled in

the land. The descendants of these people today form the aristocracy of Abyssinia and are Christian.

On the other hand, another contingent of Hebrews came to Abyssinia after the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, and have remained faithful to the original Jewish religion.

Each church in Abyssinia has a tabot, or ark of the covenant, in front of its holy of holies. This lends support to a tradition that the original Ark of the Covenant, given to the people of Israel by Jehovah, was sent to Abyssinia for safe-keeping when it was imperilled. It is an interesting fact that the Abyssinians still dance in their churches, as the Israelites did before the ark.

Abyssinia is supposed to hold many Biblical manuscripts of surpassing interest. When the French explorer, Hugues Le Roux, went there a few years ago, one of the treasures he brought back was an ancient Abyssinian manuscript of "The Song of Solomon," differing considerably from the Biblical version, and also a native version of the Queen of Sheba's visit to her illustrious ally.